



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES**  
*A Healthcare Service Agency*

**DANNEL P. MALLOY**  
**GOVERNOR**

**MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, Ph.D.**  
**COMMISSIONER**

**Testimony of Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., Commissioner**  
**Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services**  
**Before the Appropriations Committee**  
**February 23, 2017**

Good afternoon, Senators Olsten and Formica, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and I am here to discuss the Governor's proposed budget for FYs 2018 & 2019.

DMHAS is a health care service agency charged with two key responsibilities. First we focus on the prevention, treatment, and promotion of recovery, and the full citizenship of over 113,000 persons at risk for or experiencing a serious mental health or substance use condition each year. Second, through effective screening, treatment intervention, rehabilitation and recovery, DMHAS is an essential partner in ensuring the safety of our communities through the identification and management of risks related to mental illness and addiction. The DMHAS system of care is a public/private partnership which provides mental health and substance use disorder ambulatory and inpatient services, through our state-operated facilities and through contracts with over 165 private non-profit, community-based agencies statewide. This system of care includes 13 Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) and one state hospital, Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH).

While the budgetary issues will present us with challenging service system decisions this year and next, the Department remains committed to its core mission of promoting wellness, preventing illness and strengthening a recovery-oriented system of care for people with serious psychiatric and substance use conditions. It is important to recognize the investments in behavioral health services that have occurred over the past few years including the implementation of Behavioral Health Homes throughout the state and our aggressive service system response to the opioid epidemic that has affected our communities. The Governor's proposed budget for DMHAS will not only protect core services that are in place but will also realign resources to assure identified critical service system components are sufficiently funded.

This budget aligns with the DMHAS mission and vision by continuing to focus on funding for community services as we advance our recovery-oriented system of care. To achieve this some programming provided by state-operated Local Mental Health Authorities will be transferred to community non-profit providers when efficiencies can be realized without any loss of service capacity or

quality of services. In an effort to streamline current services and enhance service delivery to our clients, DMHAS will centralize detoxification services by relocating a 21 bed program from the Blue Hills campus in Hartford to CVH in Middletown. Additionally, DMHAS will privatize 21 Substance Abuse Rehabilitation beds currently located at the Blue Hills campus and relocate 16 mental health beds from the Capital Region LMHA to CVH. These planned restructurings will not result in any loss of beds in the DMHAS system.

DMHAS core services will be maintained and will continue to promote the overall health and wellness of persons with behavioral health needs through an integrated network of holistic, comprehensive, effective, and efficient mental health and substance use services and recovery supports that foster dignity, respect, and self-sufficiency. Our services and supports are culturally responsive, attentive to trauma, build on personal, family and community strengths, and focus on promoting each person's recovery and full citizenship. Integral to all services and supports is an emphasis on prevention, identifying and managing risk, and promoting safety. Some examples of services that promote this mission include inpatient and outpatient treatment programs, emergency services, medication monitoring, and housing supports.

DMHAS will continue to evaluate our service system and respond to behavioral healthcare trends by using enhanced data analysis to inform decision making, evaluating state-operated and contracted services to maximize resources, promoting evidenced-based and best practices and by encouraging partnerships to achieve efficiencies in service delivery. The Governor's budget proposal to consolidate agency funds while maintaining funding transparency will support the strategies outlined above and will provide the flexibility and accountability needed to achieve our mission.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I will be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.